ELEGIAC STANZAS

OCCASIONED BY

The DEATH

OF THE

Rev. CHARLES WESLEY, A. M.

Late of CHRIST-CHURCH COLLEGE, OXFORD:

Who departed this Life, MARCH 29, 1788, in the Eightieth Year of his Age.

By the Rev. JAMES CREIGHTON, A.B.

Late of TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

" They that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the Firmament;
" and they that turn many to Righteouſneſs, as the Stars for ever
" and ever." *Daniel* xii. 3.

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THE writer of the following Stanzas begs leave to obſerve to the reader, that he had no intention of writing any thing upon the occaſion which gave riſe to them; for, he was convinced, more than thirty years ago, of the truth of that old adage, "Poeta naſcitur, non fit." But, at the requeſt of a friend, he haſtily penned down a few Stanzas on the morning of the day in which Mr. WESLEY's remains were interred. Theſe having been printed with his permiſſion, though not by his deſire, ſeveral friends requeſted that he would enlarge them to the following ſize; to which requeſt he has reluctantly conſented. It is many years ſince he was convinced that there are ſcarcely any new thoughts or ſentiments now in the world, which may not have occurred to the minds of, though variouſly expreſſed by, men in different ages, and in different climes. He, therefore, requeſts that judicious critics will paſs by the following little piece, as being far beneath their notice: and as for *little* nibblers, who decry what they do not underſtand, he ſhall take little thought about them. If the friends, who have requeſted them, are in any wiſe gratified by the following Stanzas, the writer ſhall be entirely ſatisfied.

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ELEGIAC STANZAS, &c.

BE ſtill, ye winds; ye zephyrs, ceaſe to blow;
Whilſt muſic moſt melodious ſtrikes my ear:
Let me, in ſilent rapture lull'd below,
The SONG of TRIUMPH, Dirge of Angels, hear.

Ye ſons of *Tubal*, *Handels* of the day,
Who yearly meet to ſound a *Handel*'s fame;
Oh! could ye hear this ſoft, enchanting lay,
How would ye hide your faces all for ſhame!

Oh! what are all your pipes, and thouſand ſtrings,
With various notes, which charm a monarch's ears;
Compar'd to this, the tune which *Uriel* ſings,
This ſound divine, this muſic of the ſpheres!

Tranſporting concert!—ſymphony complete!—
Shall human voices dare with this to vie?
Extatic concord!—Oh! 'tis paſſing ſweet!—
To taſte it fully, mortals, ye muſt die!

Yet *ſometimes* men are favour'd, here beneath,
With this ſoft, ſoothing, ſweet, cherubic ſound;
When, near approaching to the ſtream of death,
The ſoul triumphant takes its final bound.

Some more than common cauſe, ſome great event,
Hath call'd theſe tuneful ſeraphs from on high:
They ſurely come, on heav'nly errand ſent,
To 'tend ſome Prince, and bear him to the ſky.

A Prince, indeed, this moment took his flight,
In *Britain* born, the poet of his day:
He left our camp to join the *ſaints in light*;
Prepare, ye heav'nly gates, to give him way!

The chariot now aſcends beyond my view,
My eyes of fleſh can here no further go:
The angels, mounting, pierce th' ethereal blue,
And leave the ſun and planets far below.

But yet my mental eye purſues them ſtill,
Where ſtars, as ſuns, in native luſtre blaze;
Where other moons, perhaps, in orbits wheel,
Or burning comets in eccentric maze.

Alas! how narrow was poor *Ovid*'s mind,
When *Phaeton* he ſung in *Sol*'s bright car!
A Chriſtian's view is clearer, leſs confin'd,
And carries him beyond each diſtant ſtar.

But ſhould my fancy take her utmoſt flight,
And dare the angel-convoy's courſe to trace,
She ſoon muſt drop; for, even *Milton*'s ſight,
Yea, *Milton*'s line can't meaſure boundleſs ſpace.

Suffice it then, that now th' angelic guard,
(Who only 'tend a ſoul that's pure from ſin;)
Cry to the *pearly* gates—" receive our ward;
Let Him that *kept the truth* now *enter in.*"

The gates unfold; and (oh! th' amazing ſcene!)
Ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſaints appear;
All cloath'd in white, and *glorious all within;*
For, ſuch the ſpirits, that inhabit there!

Theſe now exulting cry, as with one voice,
" Another ſoul has burſt its earthen clod:"
Again the echo runs—" rejoice! rejoice!
Another ſaint is come to dwell with GOD!"

I ſee, methinks, the whole harmonic band,
A *David, Aſaph, Moſes,* full of love;
In eager expectation ready ſtand,
To welcome WESLEY to the courts above.

Perhaps a *Milton*, *Rowe*, a *Watts*, or *Young*,
Who, in their day, had grac'd this favour'd iſle;
Steps forth the foremoſt from the countleſs throng,
To greet the *Britiſh* poet with a ſmile.

But, ſhall I dare t' exclude theſe bright abodes
Each *Roman* poet, and each *Grecian* ſage;
Who, *as* they knew him, ſung the God of gods,
And handed down their thoughts thro' ev'ry age?

My charity forbids; my heart o'erflows;—
For, *ſome* from ev'ry clime a manſion ſhare:
In *Homer*'s Epiſodes ſome virtue grows;
And, who can ſay that *Homer* is not there?

Philoſophers ſtand next to hail the man,
When once arriv'd on heaven's peaceful ſhore;
Who try'd their ev'ry ſyſtem, ev'ry plan,
And Truth had boldly ventur'd to explore.

A *Newton* now he meets, a *Locke*, or *Boyle*,
And thouſands more of both the wiſe and great;
Who, with amazing induſtry and toil,
Did here the works of God inveſtigate.

But, oh! what wonders can they now diſcloſe,
Which far ſurpaſs the reach of mortals' ken;
Which e'en their ſtretch of thought could not ſuppoſe,
Whilſt clogg'd with fleſh, and whilſt they were but men.

In circling crowds ſee Prophets and Divines,
Evangeliſts, Apoſtles, Prieſts, and Kings:
In ev'ry face peculiar luſtre ſhines,
And each to WESLEY now in ardor clings.

On one ſide ſee a *Paul*, a *James*, and *John*;
Who all, in doctrine, ſweetly harmonize;
Theſe now approve the man, who ſtill preſs'd on,
Nor ſtopp'd on earth, till he obtain'd the prize.

They much applaud his great, judicious mind,
A mind ſo taught by wiſdom from above;
Becauſe ſo juſtly, wiſely, he defin'd
That active faith, that faith which works by love.

Behold a *Wickliff*, *Luther*, and the reſt,
Who boldly ſtood to ſtem the papal pow'r;
Theſe all careſs the lately-landed gueſt,
Who taught mankind the triune God t' adore.

See yonder *Leighton*, *Baxter*, and an *Owen!*
A *Bedell*, and an *Uſher!* (happy pair!)
Now party-zeal and bigotry are gone,
For, even *Calvin* greets a WESLEY there.

Thro' files of ſaints he forward bends his ſteps,
(Whilſt heav'n with angel-trumpets loudly rings;)
O'er ſtreets of gold he lightly, humbly, trips,
To pay his homage to the KING of KINGS.

'Tis only *Daniel*, or beloved *John*,
Whoſe pencil ſuch a dazzling ſcene could draw;
Deſcribe the throne, and Him that ſits thereon,
Before whom *Gabriel* falls with proſtrate awe.

His *hair like wool*; his *throne like burning flame*;
His lengthen'd robes are *white* as pureſt *ſnow*:
His name JEHOVAH, or the great I AM;
Whom angel-minds *in part* can only know.

Yet He, ev'n He, with condeſcending ſmile,
And eyes, whoſe brightneſs would eclipſe the ſun;
Approves and cheers the man, who, free from guile,
Had fought the fight, and now the battle won.

That thund'ring voice, which earth and heaven ſhakes,
When God, for ſin, corrects a guilty land;
Is gentle now: the Father meekly ſpeaks,
And, as he ſpeaks, the hoſts in ſilence ſtand.

" Come hither, ſon, who boldly haſt proclaim'd
My name on earth; my free and ſaving grace:
To ſpeak the truth thou haſt not been aſham'd,
But preach'd it freely to the fallen race.

" Since thou haſt overcome, and faithful ſtood,
Deſpis'd a ſmiling world, nor fear'd its frown;
The promiſe which I made I'll now make good;
Receive from me this never-fading crown.

" Since thou haſt tun'd thy heart to ſongs of praiſe;
I here preſent thee with a golden lyre:
Thou prais'd me, as thou could'ſt, in human lays;
Now take thy ſeat amid this tuneful choir.

" Since gloomy priſons, regions of deſpair,
Did often move thy ſympathizing breaſt:
Since widows' cries, and orphans were thy care,
A manſion thou ſhalt have among the bleſt.

" The bliſs, which heaven yields, to thee I give,
The pleaſures, which are here, can never cloy:
To dwell with me is heav'n: with me to live,
Is boundleſs, endleſs, everlaſting joy."

Thrice happy ſoul!—no longer now the ſport
Of hurricanes, and ſtorms, and ev'ry wind:
Thou'rt ſafely landed, and haſt gain'd the port,
The peaceful haven, which we long to find.

We ſtill are toſs'd on this tempeſtuous ſea,
Where rocks and quickſands lie on either hand:
How ſtrait the paſſage!—Oh! what need have we
Of faith and hope, to reach *Immanuel*'s land!

By faith we ſee the ſun, thro' all the clouds,
When darkneſs intercepts, or hides the Pole:
Yea, when the tempeſt ſhatters all our ſhrouds,
And ſwelling billows, like to mountains, roll.

And tho', oftimes, amidſt a wicked crew,
Or noiſy ſons of *Belial*, we muſt fail:
Yet ſtill we're ſafe, if Chriſt we keep in view,
And deeply caſt our *hope within the vail.*

Ah! WESLEY! haſt thou left us toiling here,
Expos'd to ſtorms, in ſuch a world as this?
Canſt thou not drop a tender, friendly tear;
Tho' drinking in large draughts of endleſs bliſs?

Whilſt thro' that peaceful ocean thou doſt ſail,
Where fierce contending winds do never blow;
Methinks thy ſympathizing heart can feel
For tempted friends, whom thou haſt left below.

If ſpirits ſee us, when they reach the goal;
If GOD himſelf yearns o'er his children here:
Then ſure thy ſoft, thy tender, loving ſoul,
Can ſtill for brethren ſhew ſome anxious care.

How often did the mourner hear his voice,
Whilſt pouring in the oil, and healing balm!
How often did the ſinner's heart rejoice,
When JESUS bid the raging ſea be calm!

Yet oft he did, like *Boanerges* loud,
Denounce the thunders of a threat'ning law:
Whilſt conſternation ſeiz'd the guilty crowd,
And Deiſts ſtood aghaſt, or ſhrunk with awe.

As by the door himſelf had enter'd in;
The word of God he rightly could divide:
To comfort ſinners, when convinc'd of ſin,
And point them to a Saviour's bleeding ſide.

But, when the harden'd rebels careleſs ſtood,
Regardleſs of the ſceptre, or the rod;
Then, like a torrent, he pour'd forth a flood
Of all the threatnings in the word of God.

A maſter-builder, like to *Paul* of old,
He built on Chriſt, the chief, the corner-ſtone:
And, as a ſhepherd in the Chriſtian fold,
He went before the ſheep, and led them on.

In paſtures green the flock he always fed,
And bid them drink the healing, cooling ſtream:
Yet ſtill to more extenſive fields he led,
For, Chriſt, he ſaid, was mighty to redeem.

Was able ſtill to free the greateſt ſlave
From all his bondage, all his heavy chains:
Not only ſo; but *to the utmoſt ſave*;
And *cleanſe* the ſoul from all its fouleſt ſtains.

The richeſt treaſure from the word he brought,
Whilſt food to all judiciouſly he dealt:
Believ'd the doctrines, which he humbly taught,
Nor ſpoke a truth, which he had never felt.

Matur'd by grace, exalted, and refin'd,
His ſoul for happy climes was fitted here;
Celeſtial realms, to which his tow'ring mind
Had often ſoar'd, beyond the ſtarry ſphere.

Awhile this ſtar, like diamonds in the mine,
In unobſerv'd and hidden luſtre lay:
'Till by his Lord call'd forth at length to ſhine,
And ſpread the glorious light of goſpel-day.

At ſchool the twig was bent in early youth,
And form'd beneath a brother's * foſt'ring hand:
The tree ſprung up with ſtill increaſing growth,
And ſhed its genial virtues o'er the land.

When to the ſeats of learning he was ſent,
T' improve and exerciſe his mental pow'rs;
His time in uſeful ſcience there he ſpent,
Nor loung'd away, like fools, his precious hours.

* His brother *Samuel*, who was then Uſher of Weſtminſter-School.

He cull'd what ſweets old *Oxford* e'er could yield,
The honey ſipp'd of academic lore:
Yet ſtill he ſought a more extenſive field;
His ardent ſoul ſtill thirſted after more.

The fam'd *Parnaſſus*, oft, indeed, he trod,
And taſted all that *Helicon* could bring:
But, not content, he ſought the Mount of GOD;
And there with rapture drank a purer ſpring.

The ſacred word with diligence he read,
Tho' not regardleſs of the claſſic page:
In holy writ he found ſubſtantial bread,
The manna which GOD ſends in *ev'ry* age.

The truths divine which here he gather'd up,
As in a treaſure he laid by in ſtore:
Not at the ſilver mine content to ſtop,
He ſtill dug deeper for the golden ore.

In ſeeking thus, a pearl, at length, he found,
A precious pearl, indeed, to *Adam*'s race:
And, what he *knew*, he publiſh'd all around,
That fallen man is only ſav'd by grace.

So ardently he wiſh'd this news to tell,
That, undiſmay'd, he brav'd th' *Atlantic* flood:
And, as a means, he long'd to ſave from hell
The untaught heathens in the *Indian* wood.

When to his native land again return'd,
His Maſter's work he faithfully purſu'd:
The truth he ſpoke; tho' by the rabble ſpurn'd,
Who in his blood their hands almoſt imbru'd.

And, ſtranger ſtill! Oh! *tell it not in Gath!*
The men of letters (*Britiſh* ſhepherds too!)
Oppoſe the man profeſſing *England*'s faith,
Who preach'd her doctrines, and believ'd them true.

And tho' by ſuch miſtaken brethren ſcorn'd,
And from their temples wantonly expell'd;
Yet ſtill the Church he lov'd; yea, for her mourn'd,
And with her cloſe communion always held.

Yes, earneſtly he ſought her public weal,
For, *England*'s Church was always near his heart:
He had an ardent, yet well-temper'd zeal,
And kept 'till death a moſt *conſiſtent* part.

In warning ſinners this bold Herald ſtood,
And labour'd in the work to hoary hairs:
His uſeful life he ſpent in doing good,
A happy life of almoſt eighty years.

At laſt, when ſummon'd to reſign his breath,
His ſoul for flight was ready on the wing:
With mind compos'd he ſmil'd, and welcom'd death;
For now the horrid monſter loſt his ſting.

Yes, ev'ry ſubtle fiend now ſtood aloof;
Not *one*, he ſaid, to buffet him did dare:
And hereby gave a moſt convincing proof,
That he, thro' Chriſt, had conquer'd in the war.

The conqueſt gain'd, without a painful ſigh
He fell aſleep on JESU's lovely breaſt:
His ſpirit diſengag'd mounts up on high,
And enters its eternal, *glorious reſt*.

Ah! can I e'er forget the briny tears,
Which he o'er *London* oft in pity ſhed:
His groans, his ſighs, his moſt pathetic pray'rs,
Which he pour'd out for that proud city dead!

Yea, dead in ſins, and glorying in her ſhame,
Tho' favour'd with the Goſpel's brighteſt ray:
Audaciouſly rejecting JESU's name,
The offers ſpurning of a gracious day!

Poſterity ſhall hear, and babes rehearſe,
The healing virtues of a Saviour's name:
Yes, babes unborn ſhall ſing in WESLEY'S verſe,
And ſtill reiterate the pleaſing theme.

Ah! *Britons!* will ye *now* revere his worth?
Your loſs is ſurely his eternal gain!
The hymns he taught you, whilſt confin'd to earth,
He ſings with angels in a nobler ſtrain.

O that a ſhred might from his mantle fall,
And ſome young *Briton* catch it, as he flies!
O that his ſpirit might deſcend on all,
And from his urn another Phœnix riſe!

To copy him, may thouſands ſtill aſpire;
The pattern follow, which they muſt approve!
O may their lips be touch'd with altar-fire,
And may their hearts be fill'd with humble love!

May none preſume to run before they're ſent,
To propheſy in JESU's aweful name!
May all reſolve *to ſpend, and to be ſpent;*
And yet to merit never lay a claim!

May He, who holds the ſtars in his right hand,
And for his Church's welfare always feels;
Ambaſſadors ſend forth thro' ev'ry land,
And ſeal their office with ten thouſand ſeals!

May God regard his ſervant's frequent ſighs,
His long-repeated, yea, inceſſant ſuit!
"May *England*'s Church again in ſplendor riſe,
Bloſſom, and bud, and fill the earth with fruit!"

Now whilſt, amid the bright cherubic bands,
He tunes his harp to *Moſes*' ſong above:
On heaven's battlements, methinks, he ſtands,
And ſeems to glance at us a look of love.

Ye faithful ſouls, who know, and *feel* your loſs,
Who mourn a father, ſhepherd, and a friend:
To you he ſtill cries out—" Suſtain the croſs,
Make ſure the crown, believing to the end.

" In tribulation tho' ye ſhall be try'd,
And often muſt the crafty foe engage:
Yet ſtill there's one to help, and be your guide,
To quench the darts of Satan's fiery rage.

" The world may frown, or treacherouſly ſmile;
A thouſand things may tend your ſoul t' enſlave;
But faith o'ercomes, and will the tempter foil;
That faith in Chriſt, which looks beyond the grave.

" Keep him in view by faith's internal eye;
Behold thro' this the *Sun of Righteouſneſs:*
And when, at GOD's command, ye come to die,
Ye ſhall triumphantly depart in peace.

" I'm ſafely landed now, this ſide the flood,
'Twas but a moment's paſſage, calm, ſerene:
My JESUS led me o'er, and by me ſtood,
To cheer my heart, and give me peace within.

" And, ſince the earthen clod is laid aſide,
The face of God with extaſy I view:
So, when ye paſs o'er *Jordan*'s ſwelling tide,
Without a veil ye ſhall behold him too.

" But, when ye make this happy, happy coaſt,
Your ſpirits I ſhall meet with rapt'rous joy:
Then, mingling with the bleſt triumphant hoſt,
A whole ETERNITY in praiſe employ."

F I N I S.

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